



SYNOPSIS.

Mr. Solomon Pratt began comical narration of story, introducing well-to-do Nathan Scudder of his town, and Edward Van Brunt and Martin Hartley, two rich New Yorkers seeking rest. Van Brunt, it was learned, was the successful suitor for the hand of Miss Agnes Page, who gave Hartley up. Adventure at Fourth of July celebration at Eastwick. Hartley rescued a boy, known as "Reddy," from under a horse's feet and the urinal proved to be one of Miss Page's charges, whom she had taken to the country for an outing. Van Brunt rented an island from Scudder and called it Ozona Island. In charge of a company of New York power children Miss Talford and Miss Page visited Ozona Island. Eureka Sparrow, a country girl, was engaged as a cook and Van Brunt and Hartley paid a visit to her father, who for years had been claiming consumption as an excuse for not working. Upon another island visit by Miss Page, Eureka diagnosed Hartley's case as one of love for Agnes. Hartley invented a plan to make Washington Sparrow work. In putting the plan into effect Hartley incurred wrath of Miss Page, the whom the "sick man" sent. Agnes then appeared. Van Brunt, Sparrow, to escape the treatment proclaimed himself well and went to work. Storm-borne on Van Brunt island, Van Brunt and Hartley tried of the "Natural Life." Hartley suffered a broken arm while hunting a physician for "Reddy," supposed to be suffering from appendicitis.

CHAPTER XVII.—Continued.

The lane of deep water narrowed up ahead of us and there was a kind of gate, as you might say, at the end. Hartley looked at me and I at him.

"Can you?" he asks. He was white as paper, but not from being scared I was sure. His left arm hung down straight and he kept rubbing it.

"Lord knows," I says. "Are you hurt?"

He didn't answer; just shook his head. On went the Dora Bassett. Shows the old girl's heart! She was doing her best to pull us through.

The gate was just in front of our nose. I set my teeth and headed her for the middle of it. A jiffy more, and the crazy breakers jumped at us from both sides. Their froth flew over us in chunks. Then we was through, and I fetched my first decent breath.

We was in a kind of pond now, where we had elbow room.

Martin looked astern. "Here comes a boat," says he.

'Twas the lifeboat from the station. They'd seen our trouble and was coming full tilt. I hadn't ever been took off my own boat by no life-savers, and I wasn't going to begin.

"Heave to!" hails the crew cap'n from the boat. "We're coming to take you off."

I didn't answer.

"Heave to!" he yells again. "Heave to!"

I turned my head a little ways.

"Go home and get your breakfast," I sings out. "We're busy."

They kept on for a ways, and then they give it up. I ran two or three more of them lanes and then, when I had the chance, I dropped my mainsail and histed the jib. And with that jib and the oar I picked my way for another spell, in and out and betwixt and between. At last we slid past the Wapatomac breakwater and up to the wharf. A nice piece of work for anybody's boat, if I do say it.

Hartley seemed to think so, too, for says he: "Skipper, that was beautiful. You're a wonder."

"Twenty minutes of six," says I. "We're on time."

There was an early-bird lobsterman on the wharf, come down to see how many of his pots had gone adrift in the night. He stood and stared at us.

"God sakes!" says he. "Where'd you come from?"

"Wellmouth," says I, making fast to a ring bolt.

"In her?" he says, pointing to the sloop. "In this gale? Never in the world!"

"All right. Then we didn't." I hadn't no time to waste arguing.

"Good land of love!" he says, kind of to himself. "Say! she must be something of a boat."

I looked at the poor old Dora Bassett. Rudder gone, centerboard smashed, rail carried away and hull nigh filled with water.

"She was," says I. "Considerable of a boat."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Poor Reddy.

Hartley had climbed on the wharf and now he was heading for the village. I got the sloop fast, after a fashion, and then run over and caught up with him. He was walking with long steps and looking straight ahead. His left fist was in the side pocket of his jacket and his face was set and pale under the tan. I happened to bump into him as I came alongside, and he jumped and gave a little groan.

"What's the matter with that arm of yours?" I asked, anxious. He'd stopped for a second and was biting his lips together.

"Nothing," he says, short. "Bruised a little, I guess. Where's the hotel?"

"Up the main road a piece. That's it on top of the hill."

"Come on then," says he, walking faster than ever.

We went through Wapatomac village like we was walking for money. Some of the town folks was just getting up, and you could see smoke coming from kitchen chimneys and window shades being hoisted. Once in a while, where the families was particularly early risers, a sleet-fried

bering. In the center, by the post-office, the feller that keeps the market was just taking down his store shutters. He looked at us kind of odd.

"Good morning," he says. "Going to fair off at last, ain't it?"

"Guess likely," says I, keeping on. "You been on the water, ain't you?"

he asks. "Get caught down to the Point?"

Long Point's a great place for Wapatomac folks to go on clamming and fishing trips. I suppose he thought we'd been out the day afore, when it cleared that time, and had had to put in at the station over night. We must have looked like we'd been through the mill. Both of us was sopping wet, and I had on rubber boots and a sou'wester. I'd thrown off my lieskin coat at the wharf.

I didn't stop to explain. I had to save my breath to keep up with Martin. The nigher he got to the hotel the faster he walked.

The Wapatomac house is about the toniest summer place on our part of the coast. A great big building, with piazzas and a band stand, and windows and wind-mills and bowling al-

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This last part was loaded to the gunwale with sarcasm.

"Yes," says Hartley emphatic. "Where is the doctor staying in Brantboro?"

"Cold Spring house. Want to know what he pays for his room?"

Martin didn't answer. He walked to the door. I stopped for a jiffy.

"See here, my smart aleck," says I to the clerk, "you'll have some more fun from this later on, when your boss hears of it. Do you know who 'tis you've been assing? That young man is John D. Vanderbilt of New York."

There is some satisfaction in a first-class lie. It done me good to see that clerk shrivel up.

Martin was calling to me. "Sol," he asks, like a flash, "how can I get to Brantboro?"

"You can't—in time to catch that morning train. Brantboro's ten mile off, and the train that gets here at 7:15 minutes of eight leaves there at 7:15. That was the one we was to have the doctor on. And it's past six now."

He spun around on his heel. "Is the telegraph line to Brantboro working?" he asked the clerk.

"No, sir! No, sir! My! but he was polite. 'I'm sorry to say not, sir.'"

"Can I get a horse here?"

"The livery stable is right around the corner; but I don't think—"

We was at that livery stable in less than two shakes. The feller that took care of the horses and slept in the stable loft was up and sweeping out.

"Have you got a horse that will take me to Brantboro in half an hour?" asks the Twin.

The feller stared at him. "Be you crazy?" says he.

Martin didn't answer. "Whose machine is that?" he asks.

He was pointing to a big automobile in the stable. A great big red thing,

saying it while the Twin was getting up steam, or some such trick, in the auto. He said it even after he'd got the money in his hand. The hired man climbed in behind. Hartley and me in front. We chuff-chuffed out of the stable door.

"For heaven's sake!" hollers Baker, "take care of the thing. I don't know what'll come to me for this job when Shearer hears of it."

We got down to the street. I looked at my watch. It was 25 minutes past six.

"Now, Sol," says Hartley, "you must help me if I need you. I can use only one hand, so you pull whatever lever I tell you to."

We went—oh, yes, we went! I'd never rode in a buzz cart afore and inside of five minutes I was figuring that I'd never live to ride in one again. Suffering! how we did fly!

Lucky 'twas early. We didn't meet a soul on the road. If we had they'd had lively times getting out of our way. Away ahead somewhere there'd be a house with a dog scooting out of the gate, his mouth open ready to bark. Next minute we'd go past that house like a sky-rocket, and the pup would be digging a breathing hole through the dust behind us. I didn't have to pull a lever, for we had a clear field. Good thing I didn't, because I was too scared to know my hands from my feet. The stable man was actually blue. Next time I see Baker he told me that the feller had nightmare for a fortnight afterwards, and they could hear him yelling "Whoa!" in his sleep as plain as could be. And they in the house with the windows shut.

Afore I had time to think straight, scarcely, or remember to say more than a line or two of "Now I lay me," we was sizzling through Brantboro. We whirled into the big yard of the Cold Spring house and hauled up by the steps. Hartley piled out and I followed him. We'd used up just 18 minutes.

"Here!" says he to the clerk, a twin brother of the one at Wapatomac; "take this to Dr. Jordan's room."

He scribbled something on a slip of paper and chucked it across the desk. The clerk yelled for a boy and the boy took the paper and lit out. Pretty quick he comes back.

"He wants you to come right up, mister," says he.

"Good!" says Martin, tossing him half a dollar. "Lead the way."

The youngster started for the stairs, grinning like a punkin lantern. I flopped into a chair and felt myself all over to make sure I hadn't shook no part of me loose on the trip. Like-wise I watched the clock.

In ten minutes more the Twin comes downstairs, and Dr. Jordan was with him. The doctor was a big gray-haired man with a pleasant face. He looked as though he'd dressed in a hurry, and he had a travelling satchel in his hand.

"I'll send you a check for my bill later," he says to the clerk. "All ready, Mr. Hartley."

We went out to the automobile. Martin started her up and we whizzed for the depot.

"Great Scott!" says the doctor, "I feel as if I had been pulled out of bed by the hair. Nobody but your father's son could do this to me, Hartley. Have you fellows fed yet?"

The Twin was too busy with the steering wheel to answer. I done it for him.

"No, sir," says I; "not since yesterday noon. Nor slept since night afore last."

Martin run the automobile into one of the horse sheds by the depot. Then he passed the stable man the bill that happened to be on the outside of his roll. "Twas a tanner, for I caught a glimpse of it."

"Here," he says; "take this and wait here till the shoer comes for the machine. Well, skipper, we're on time, after all."

So we was, and ahead of it. We waited on the depot platform. I noticed that Hartley wasn't saying much. Now that the excitement was over, he seemed to me to be mighty quiet. Once, when he walked, I thought he staggered. And he was awful white.

"Sol," he says to me, just as the train hove in sight; "you needn't come with us, unless you want to. Maybe you'd like to stay and attend to your boat."

I looked at him. "No," says I. "I'm going to see it through. The boat can wait."

I had to give him a boost up the car steps. As he got to a seat, he staggered again.

"Skipper," he says, quiet and with little stops between the words, "I'm—afraid you'll—have—to—look—out for the doctor. I'm believe I'm going—to—to—make a fool of myself."

—And then he flops over on the cushions in a dead faint.

Doctor Jordan was at him in a second.

"It's his arm, I guess," says I. "He bruised it aboard the sloop."

The doctor pulled up Hartley's coat sleeve and felt of the arm.

"Bruised it!" he says. "I should say he did. The arm is broken."

Now you can bet that Martin Hartley wasn't the only sick man aboard that train just then. There was another one and he'd been christened Solomon. When I heard that doctor say that the Twin's arm was broken I give you my word I went cold all over. Think of the grit of the feller—the clean up and down grit of him! Ram-paging around, running automobiles and chasing doctors, and all that with a broken arm. And never even mentioning it. I took off my hat to that New Yorker. Crazy or not he could have my vote for any job from pound-keeper to president.

Baker followed us to the barn, saying "No" all the time. He kept on

with a shiny painted hull and nickel-plated running rigging.

"Mr. Shearer's. He's away for a week and we're keeping it for him."

"Can I hire it?"

The feller's mouth fell open like 'twas on hinges.

"Hire it? Hire Mr. Shearer's automobile?" says he. "Well, I'll be darned!"

"Where's your employer?" asks Hartley, quick.

"Hey?"

"Your boss!" I sings out, dancing up and down. "For the land sakes wake up! Where is he?"

"In the house, I guess. Where do you—"

We met the livery stable owner just coming out of his kitchen with a pan of leavings for the pig. He'd just turned out. I knew him; his name was Ben Baker. Martin went at him hot-foot, speaking in short sentences.

"I want to hire that auto in your stable," he says. "I must get to Brantboro before seven o'clock. I'll pay any price. But I must have it."

Then there was more arguing. Baker said no. Was we crazy? He couldn't let another man's auto to the Almighty himself. And Mr. Shearer's auto, of all things! Why, Shearer would kill him. And so forth and so on.

But Hartley kept cool. He must have the machine. He'd be responsible for damages. He explained about the doctor.

"I'll pay you—so and so," says he. Never mind the price he offered. It was so big that I wouldn't be believed if I told it. Baker didn't believe it either till Martin pulled out a roll of bills and showed him.

"I'll buy the thing if necessary," says he. "But I'll have it. Come, skipper."

The shoer's up at Shearer's house," says Baker. "He—"

"Never mind the shoer. I can run it. Send your man with us, and I'll leave the machine in his care at Brantboro. Then the shoer can come after it. I'll write to Mr. Shearer and explain. Come on."

"It's all right, Ben," I says. "He'll do all he tells you, and more. You'll never make a chunk of money any easier."

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